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**NOV 18 2004**

Docket No.: A-2829

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicant : Lutz Richter et al.  
Applic. No. : 09/852,348 Confirmation No. 4692  
Filed : May 9, 2001  
  
Title : Gathering Stapler with Separate Drives and  
Method of Operating the Gathering Stapler  
  
Examiner : Gloria R. Weeks  
Group Art Unit: 3721  
Docket No. : A-2829  
Customer No. : 24131

**D E C L A R A T I O N under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131**

The undersigned Lutz Richter, Andreas Steinert, and Siegmar  
Tischer hereby declare:

The invention of the above-identified application was  
"conceived" and "reduced to practice" in one of the United  
States, a NAFTA country other than the United States, or a WTO  
member country at least as early as April 9, 2000.

Enclosed, as corroborating evidence is the Invention Disclosure  
(*Erfindungsmeldung*) which is a pre-printed form filled-out and  
signed by the undersigned. The Invention Disclosure was  
executed by the undersigned on March 6, 2000. The Invention  
Disclosure was given to the Heidelberg Patent Department on  
March 9, 2000.

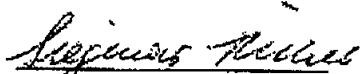
The undersigned declares that all statements made herein of his own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.



Lutz Richter

Date: 15 November, 2004.

Andreas Steinert

Date: 15 November, 2004.

Siegmar Tischer

Date: 15 November, 2004.